

WASHINGTON, DC - Today the White House released a congressionally mandated report assessing progress in Iraq, or lack thereof, against 18 benchmarks established by Congress and signed into law by the President in late May 2007. To follow is Representative Peter DeFazio's statement on the report: "Although you have to carefully read between the lines of status quo, stay-the-course happy-talk in the administration's report to actually comprehend the reality in Iraq, the ultimate conclusion of the report is clear - the political progress and national reconciliation that are necessary to bring about stability in Iraq are non-existent," said DeFazio. "Our generals agree - there is no military solution to the violence in Iraq.

If the Iraqi leaders do not want to make the political compromises necessary to live in peace, then no amount of U.S. firepower or fierce determination by our troops can create stability."

"And while our troops remain bogged down in Iraq fighting two sides of a civil war as well as a handful of foreign terrorists, al-Qaeda's leaders continue to strengthen the organization and plan attacks against the United States from their safe haven along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border," DeFazio warned. "Our troops have done all that has been asked of them in Iraq. Democracy and stability cannot be imposed on unwilling parties. The U.S. needs to establish a timeline to bring our troops home soon. Dem

Being confronted with the reality of a U.S. withdrawal should force the Iraqi factions to reach the compromises necessary to move their country forward. If not, there is no reason to prolong the U.S. involvement in Iraq if we want a stable country more than the Iraqi people and their elected leaders do," DeFazio concluded.